REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 16, 2007 Claims 1-19 are pending in this application, with claims 1 and 19 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claim 1 has been amended and claim 19 has been added. It is submitted that no new matter has been added and no new issues have been raised by the present Amendment.

The disclosure was objected to because of several formal matters with the specification. In response, the specification has been reviewed and amended with particular attention to the points raised in the Office Action. Withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to as allegedly not showing every feature of the claimed invention. In particular, the Office Action indicates that the collector shoe being fixedly mounted on the blade root and the contact member in form of a rail mounted on the rotor hub (dependent claim 3) must be shown or the features canceled from the claims. According to 35 U.S.C. §113, the applicant shall furnish a drawing "where necessary for the understanding of the subject matter to be patented." Applicants respectfully submit that given the teachings in the specification of the present application, the claim features in question are well within the purview of one of ordinary skill in the art. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 8-11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1-7 and 12-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by WO01/86144 to Wobben. Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submit independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited art for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 relates to a wind turbine rotor including a rotor hub (3) and a plurality of blades (4). Each blade root (16) is connected to the rotor hub through a pitch bearing (5) in such a manner that the pitch angle of the blade is adjustable by a turning of the blade about its longitudinal axis relative to the rotor hub. The blade is provided with at least one electrically conducting lightening down-conductor (6) extending in the longitudinal direction of the blade to the blade root and being electrically isolated from the pitch bearing (5). A spark gap (15) is provided between the lightning down-conductor and the rotor hub, the spark gap (15) being adapted to conduct a lightning current passing through the lightning down-conductor to the rotor hub. A sliding contact connection (7, 12) is provided parallel to the spark gap (15) between the lightning down-conductor (6) and the rotor hub (3), the sliding contact connection ensuring electrical contact between the lightening down-conductor (6) and the rotor hub (3) irrespective of the pitch angle of the blade.

Wobben, as understood by Applicants, relates to a wind power installation including a static diverter for continuously discharging electrostatic charges on the rotor blades. Wobben is concerned with minimizing the number of interferences with the electronic system caused by flash-over effects at the spark path. Bar-shaped conducting elements 7 function as down-conductors and are connected to aluminium ring 8 extending around the blade root. Different discharge paths are provided for electrostatic charge and for lightning currents. The

system includes a way in which electrostatic charges are directly removed by way of a static diverter which is conductively arranged between aluminium ring 8 and the blade adapter for discharging electrostatic energy through the hub [para 0027]. On the other hand, charges which originate from a lightning strike are carried away past the hub. As understood, transfer projection 11 is brought close to diverter ring 10 to form a spark gap. However, a spark gap is not provided between the lightning down-conductor and the rotor hub. In addition, as shown in Fig. 4 of Wobben, sliding connection (8, 9) is provided in series with the spark gap (10, 11).

Accordingly, Applicants find no teaching or suggestion in the cited art of a spark gap provided between the lightning down-conductor and the rotor hub, wherein the spark gap conducts a lightning current passing through the lightning down-conductor to the rotor hub, as recited in independent claim 1.

In addition, as shown in Fig. 4 of Wobben, the sliding connection (8, 9) is provided in series with the spark gap (10, 11).

In contrast, as shown in Fig. 4 of Applicants' present disclosure, the spark gap 15 is provided parallel to the sliding contact connection (7, 12). Applicants find no disclosure in Wobben of a sliding contact connection provided parallel to the spark gap, as recited in independent claim 1.

Finally, the sliding contact (8, 9) in Wobben is provided between the conductors 7 and the machine carrier 14 [para 0023].

In contrast, as recited in independent claim 1, the sliding contact connection is provided between the lightning down-conductor and the rotor hub to ensure electrical contact between the lightening down-conductor and the rotor hub irrespective of the pitch angle of the blade

Accordingly, Applicants submit independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited art.

In addition, independent claim 19 is believed to be patentably distinct from the cited art, for at least similar reasons.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fees to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Entry of this amendment and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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